

least of the great men whom she had produced. She quickened the intellectual life of England by an Oxford movement. For this noble treason against obscurantist ideals, she was now struck down by a conspiracy of Church and King, her noble liberty was taken from her, and till the new age came, the history of the schools was * bound in shallows and in miseries/

If the University had been united within itself, this invasion would not have been easy. But it was split into two parties. The * seculars/ who regarded themselves as the University proper, consisted of secular clergy for the most part, priests like Wycliffe, or deacons and clerks in lower orders. These men were academicians first and churchmen second. They were as jealous of Papal and episcopal interference, as of royal mandates, or of the power and privileges of the town. Their rights were protected against all aggression by the countless hosts of turbulent undergraduates herding in the squalid lodging-houses of the city, who, when occasion called, poured forth to threaten the life of the Bishop's messenger, to hoot the King's officials, or to bludgeon and stab the mob that maintained the Mayor against the Chancellor. The medieval student, although miserably poor and enthusiastically eager for learning, was riotous and lawless to a degree that would have shocked the silliest and wealthiest set that ever made a modern college uncomfortable. The ordinary undergraduate, as well as the ordinary townsman, possessed a sword, which he girded on for his protection on a journey or for any other special cause, so that the riots in the streets of Oxford were affairs of life and death, and the feud of 'town and gown' a blood-feud. Many of the students were laymen, but the majority were in training to be clerks; there can be little doubt that the lawless habits contracted at the University account in part for the violent and scandalous life of the innumerable clergy in lower orders. The college system had already arisen to meet this evil, but it was not till the fifteenth century that any very large proportion of the 'secular' students were brought under college discipline. Heresy could more easily spread in the inns and lodging-houses where the students then lived, than in colleges